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Centralization of Schools,
its Needs and Advantages.

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the past six years Superintendent
of Public Schools, Kingsville, O.

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Education.

THE word "education" has received various definitions at the hands of the best writers, all of which center upon one important truth—man is of a triple nature; this triplicity is manifested morally, mentally and physically. True education is the perfecting of man in this triplicity of nature. The training of the mind and soul for future usefulness is one of the most important works to which anyone may be called. It seems to us that there is no work which embraces so many points of vital importance to the home, the state and the individual as that of the teacher. To educate the child for usefulness as a citizen and as a member of society, requires not only a systematic line of instruction, but a decided effort upon the part of the child. Truth must be valued and sought, for the mental power which it gives; discipline, for the permanent strength which it imparts to the soul. Pure, high, noble and patriotic thoughts must be inspired in the youthful minds and hearts, and their energies must be wisely directed in the line of truth and duty.

The lowest conception which one may hold in reference to education is the acquiring of only such knowledge as will enable one to secure the necessities of life and furnish him with shelter from the inclemencies of the climate. This low conception of education has in the past, and does today, prevail to an alarming extent in many parts of our country. Those who have had the opportunity for observation, or have taken the time for thought, are impressed with the importance of a more extensive education,

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with better facilities, for the great mass of American youths of today. If what Dr. Parkhurst has said be true, that "to send an uneducated child into the world is like turning a mad dog into the street," then we as loyal men and women are bound by the most rigid bonds of state and society, as well as under the most sacred, moral obligations to improve, foster and protect those institutions which furnish to the young the means of mental culture. Among these institutions there are none which demand our attention more than the common school. Here is the educational shrine around which a large proportion of our youth collect and receive that training and discipline which prepares them for the active duties of life; just as these institutions for learning are improved and extend greater opportunities for culture and intellectual improvement to the young, so to a large degree will be the success of these boys and girls in the future.

We must admit that our common school system is susceptible to change and improvement; for if this is not true, then they must forever remain in their present condition from an uncontrollable fatality of causes. I am well aware that whenever improvement have been suggested in the past, contemplating any radical change in our system of education, it has been met with decided opposition from those who should have been its best advocates. Gallileo, when he had invented the telescope and turned it towards the blue dome of heaven, beholding the beauty of the glittering orbs thus revealed to his sight, found that many of his co-workers in this great field of science refused to avail themselves of the advantages of this wonderful instrument, and they went down to life's close ignorant of much knowledge available to them. A few years ago when the surveyors passed through our country laying out routes for the railroad lines, men argued long and well, saying that these railroads would ruin the country, turn teamsters and teams out of employment, and prove disastrous to our interests in every conceivable way; yet all admit today that these same railroads have been one of the greatest blessings of

modern times. A few years ago, when a few members of Boards of Education in the rural districts of Ohio advocated the paying of teachers a fixed salary and the abandonment of the plan requiring the teacher to "board around," they were met by opposition, both from members of the board and patrons of the school, and ill-omened prophecies and illogical arguments were again brought forward. The right prevailed and the "boarding around" of the Ohio teacher is of the past. By these experiences we ought to have learned that any important improvement, in whatever field we are laboring, will meet with opposition, and in order to perfect a change, it becomes necessary to investigate the proposed system dispassionately and without prejudice, and if need be, with mathematical exactness. If the system stands the test of such an investigation, then all candid, enlightened, interested persons are morally bound to advocate the system in every reasonable way.

That there is need of a change in our present rural system of education is evident. If our knowledge of educational institutions and systems (as is too often the case) be based upon what we have read in our daily papers, or the magazines of our country, or what we have heard from the lips of some brilliant orator when he was paying a glowing tribute to our educational advantages and systems, then we have no cause for apprehension; but if we go forth into the rural districts of our country and examine the schools critically, observe the actual interest taken in the schools and manifested for their prosperity, we discover an apathy and indifference as to the character and usefulness of the common school which we little expected. This indifference is manifested in many ways. Perhaps that which first attracts the attention of a critical observer in rural districts is that the patrons of the school seldom visit it. If a man is hired upon the farm, he is given careful thought and attention. It is necessary to look after his labors several times each day, but in matters of such moment as the training of the child's intellect for life's duties and his

soul for eternity, the parent becomes quite-indifferent and gives it no thought or attention, unless the child itself brings to-the attention of the parent some adverse report of the teacher's work in school. Then the parent is quite willing to accept this report verbatim, without investigation, and condemn the work of the teacher. Now this same parent would not accept the child's decision for a single moment upon questions pertaining to the selection of clothing, furnishing or repairing the farm buildings, yet he does not hesitate to accept in full his judgment upon questions pertaining to his education. This is wrong and is indicative of his indifference to the character of the school which his child attends. I have no doubt but that this indifference is partly the effect of habit, being influenced by his ancestors before him and his neighbors who live near him, yet he will hardly give as a reason for not visiting the school, that he never saw his father within the walls of a school room, although it is possible that this is the chief reason. If asked why he does not visit the school or take more interest in its character, he will probably say that he has not the time, or that he does not feel competent to judge of its work, or some similar answer which is equally indicative of a want of interest. We believe that one of the most effective ways of stimulating more interest in local educational affairs is by centralization, that is to unite the sub-district schools of a township into a common central school, and provide for the conveyance of the pupils to and from school by the use of coaches. This is not an untried plan, but has proved its practical value by over twenty years' test in Massachusetts—Concord, a town of 4,000 inhabitants, situated twenty miles from Boston, and was the first town to introduce this system in the U. S. The result of this innovation in the school system of this village was carefully observed with no little interest by educators in Massachusetts. At the time of consolidating the schools of Concord there were twelve separate schools, occupying eleven school buildings, located in different parts of the township. Five were located in the village and the rest ranging from one and

one-half to three miles from the village. In 1880, after a vigorous and well directed campaign, an appropriation was secured, and an eight-roomed school building was erected in the village. The superintendent of the Concord schools in his annual report says : "An immediate and inevitable improvement in every quality that distinguishes a good from a poor school resulted." The result was that the state legislature sanctioned the plan and enacted a law permitting townships in the state to vote on the question of consolidating their schools, and wherever the people favored the plan, the Board of Education was directed to make the changes and appropriations necessary to put it in operation. At that time there were a large number of country districts, and today there is scarcely a small school in the state.

The following is taken from an address delivered by Professor J. P. Treat, of Geneva, O., before the Teachers' Institute of Delaware county during the institute session of 1897 : "What Concord was to Massachusetts in this pioneer educational reform, Kingsville, Ashtabula county, promises to be to the Buckeye state, and it is fitting that Ohio's Concord should be located on the Western Reserve, where really progressive ideas are very likely to take root and bear good fruit, notwithstanding its well known conservatism. The people of Kingsville, like the people of Concord, found that their sub-districts were very small, and their results, educationally speaking, far from being satisfactory. After considerable discussion the remedy of consolidation was proposed, and that, too, as far as I can learn, without any special knowledge of what Massachusetts was doing along the same line."

In order to consolidate the schools and provide for the conveyance of the pupils to and from the central building in Kingsville, it was necessary to secure special legislation. The following bill was passed by the Ohio state legislature April 17, 1894: SECTION I. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Ohio, that any board of education in any township, which by the census of 1890 had a popula-

tion not less than 1,710 nor more than 1,715 ; of any county, which by the same census had not less than 43,650 nor more than 43,660 inhabitants, may, at their discretion, appropriate funds derived from the school tax levy of said township for the conveyance of pupils in sub-districts from their homes to the high school building of such township; provided, such appropriation for any sub-district shall not exceed the amount necessary, in the judgment of the board, for the maintenance of a teacher in such sub-district for the same period of time.

The need of a more general law was brought to the attention of the state legislature in 1895-96, and on April 27, 1896, the following bill was passed, being House Bill 880 of the 1896 Laws of Ohio : Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Ohio, that the board of education of any township district situated in the counties of Stark, Ashtabula and Portage may, when in its opinion it will be for the best interest of the pupils in any sub-district, suspend the school in such sub-district and provide for the conveyance of said pupils to such other district or districts as may be convenient for them ; the cost of such conveyance to be paid out of the contingent fund of said district; provided, the board of any special school district in any county mentioned above may provide for the conveyance of pupils out of contingent funds, the same as township districts aforesaid.

No compulsion was used in putting the system in use at Kingsville, O., but each sub-district was admitted upon a written petition signed by the patrons of the school in the district. The people of Kingsville being a progressive and intelligent people, the difficulties of putting in operation such a system were not as great, and the objections were not as many, as may be experienced in many localities. One of the principal objections which we have met in our discussion of the subject in different sections of the state, comes from teachers or their friends, who apparently see that with centralization of schools it may be more difficult for them to secure positions as teachers. In answering this objection,

we ask the question, "For which class of persons are the district schools of our country, teachers or pupils?" If they are for the benefit of the pupils, it would then be wise to employ that method which would give the best results for the expenditure of a given amount of money; but if they are to be used for missionary purposes to give employment to a few teachers, regardless of results upon the pupils, then these young pupils deserve our deepest sympathies.

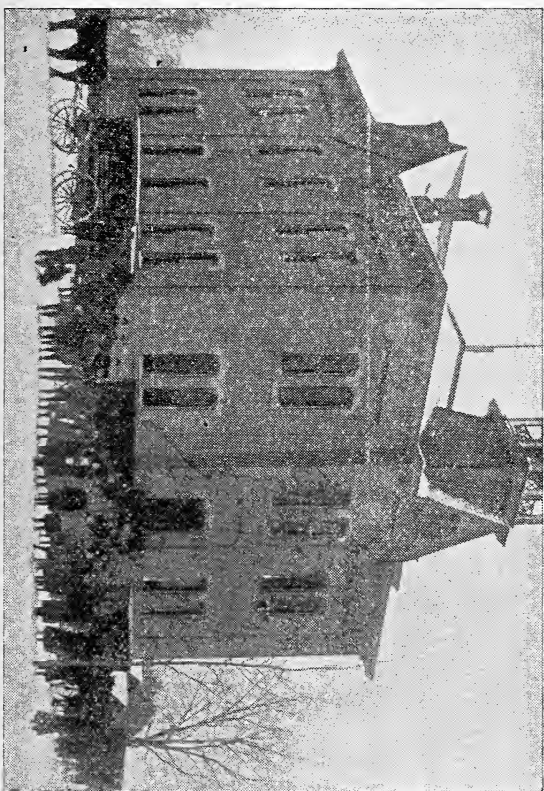


The Need of Centralization of Schools.

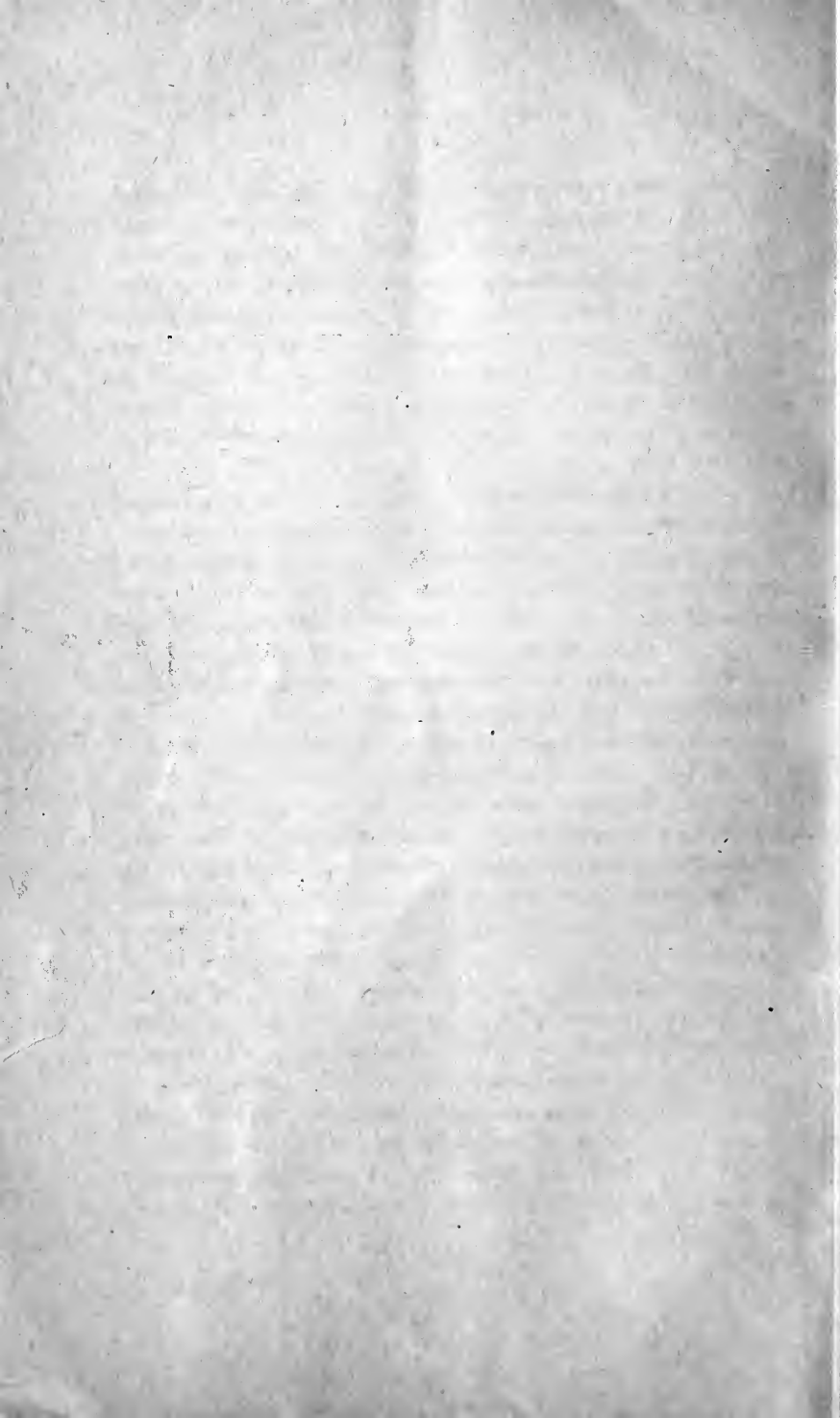
ANY person who will take the time to investigate the management of the rural schools of today will find them wholly inadequate to the great demands made upon them. These are the minor fountains of knowledge, at which a large number of American youths receive that training and mental discipline which must have an essential bearing upon individual and national prosperity.

After a careful investigation of rural schools we find but few which have anything like system. There is no course of study, hence no plan for the mental development of the pupils. Pupils are permitted to take up such work as they prefer and omit that which they dislike. A teacher is only employed for a term of two or three months, and unless he conducts the school to suit the caprices of a particular few, he is discharged (that the member of the board of education may receive a re-election to his office at the expiration of his term) and another teacher is employed for the following term; in this way teachers are being changed in the school from term to term and pupils are doing the same grade of work over and over, thus losing all interest in their studies. In many of these schools the classes consist of only two or three pupils, and their work is characterized by a lack of interest and enthusiasm. Interest and enthusiasm are important characteristics in the education of the young, and are only cultivated in the highest degree by the associations of numbers.

However deplorable all the other defects which are so abundant in one common school system, we believe that which towers



Kingsville Centralized Schools.



above all the others is the complete lack of system. "System is the first law of heaven," and should characterize every department of school work. It is that which gives form and beauty to all material objects. What is it but complete system which causes the various heavenly bodies to glide upon their silvery courses through space, crossing and recrossing the paths, the one of the other, yet all travel forward in perfect harmony. It is the perfect system in the construction and arrangement of the several parts of the watch which causes it to point out to us the correct time from day to day.

If system and arrangement are so important with material objects to obtain the best results, how much more important it must be in the education of the young. It is true that the teacher is not responsible for the lack of system in our rural schools. Let the teacher be as well qualified as possible for her work, place her in any one of these schools, and we will find that it will be impossible for her to do more than superficial work, on account of the large number of classes to recite each day, the few pupils in each class and the opposition that she will meet from members of the board of education and patrons of the school, if she attempts to introduce any improved methods of conducting the school. We can call to mind now several townships in our home county where teachers have attempted the improvement of the schools under their charge during the past two or three years, and each trial has resulted in failure, from the opposition of parents and a lack of co-operation upon the part of the boards of education.

Let us look into one of these rural schools and ascertain the exact conditions under which the teacher is compelled to conduct her work. First, we find that the number of pupils vary from district to district, and this variation of numbers determines the size of the several classes. Now, the average rural school contains from three to twenty pupils, and the classes in such a school will consist of from one to four pupils; the number of recitations in the school will be from twenty-one to forty. We have been

unable to find more than two or three rural schools during the past year which had less than thirty daily recitations, and in each school that had less than thirty daily recitations, the enrollment was below ten pupils. It is a well known pedagogical fact that the work of the teacher depends more upon the number of recitations to recite than upon the number of pupils in attendance at the school. That is, a teacher with fifty pupils in a school of two grades would have about twelve daily recitations, while a teacher in a rural district school of fifteen or twenty pupils would have about three times that number. Allowing one hour's time each day for the calling of recitations and miscellaneous work, one-half hour for recesses, we would have remaining four and one-half hours for recitations. In the graded school it would give us recitations of twenty-two and one-half minutes each ; in the district school of seven and one-half minutes each. If we give these facts careful thought, we will observe that it is practically impossible for a teacher to do any degree of satisfactory work with recitations limited to seven and one-half minutes. The opponents of centralization bring forward the argument that with the school of twenty the teacher has an opportunity for more individual work. This objection has been answered previously, but as we have access to an almost unlimited resource of arguments that can be presented, each based upon psychological truths which have been demonstrated in the practical work of the school-room, we will present another: Admit for argument's sake that the teacher in the rural school has an opportunity for more individual work (although this cannot be true in the average district school on account of the larger number of recitations). This proves injurious to the pupils instead of a benefit, for " the mind is developed only by its own activities," and all assistance of the teacher, more than to lead the pupils to recognize and understand principles, is a detriment to the mental growth of the pupils, and such explanation of principles should be given during the recitation and not privately. Every difficult problem

solved by the teacher develops her mental powers and not those of the pupil. In the rural sub-district school we find the attendance of pupils very irregular, and tardiness is a common characteristic. Where is the teacher in a rural school who is not annoyed morning after morning by tardy pupils, and what teacher does not find it to be true that the tendency of parents is to keep the pupils from school for the most trivial excuses?

We have a system which has stood the test of practical experiment for several years, which we believe is particularly calculated to correct efficiently the defects in our country school system. If this system proposed is found to be based upon right principles; if we find it calculated to benefit the public by its practical operation; if pupils can in the same time and at the same expense as now, or even at less expense, acquire two or three times the amount of actual, available knowledge; if instead of giving him an abnormal and superficial education, it conducts him step by step through a systematic course of instruction, drawing out all the mental powers harmoniously and naturally; giving the pupil a practical education in all legitimate subjects of investigation; if all these should appear to be the natural results of that system, is it not evident, then, that this system should be immediately employed in the education of our youth? We believe that the welfare of the rising generation demands it; that patriotism and filial duty require it. Are not the voters of every community bound by the most sacred duty of citizenship and the demand of justice not to withhold from posterity a benefit which has been proven by practical experiment to be far superior to the present system in use and which they have the power to confer? There can be but one conclusion to this question. All candid, enlightened, impartial men will decide in the affirmative.

Let all who are interested in the education of the young investigate the proposed system, taking up the particulars one by one, and if need be, with mathematical exactness determine their practicability, remembering consequences of no ordinary moment

hang upon one decision. The preparation of the youth of our country for life's duties rests upon our deliberations and according to our final conclusion, their chances for success in life will either be brightened or permitted to fade into the dim future. My friends, your boys and girls in the near future will be compelled to enter the great battle of life and combat with those who are being educated in the well graded schools of our towns, villages and cities, and if we expect our children of the rural districts to acquit themselves with any degree of success in this great conflict of life, then we most assuredly must furnish them with similar opportunities for preparation.

The system proposed for the improvement of rural schools was first put in operation, in Ohio, at Kingsville, Ashtabula county, five years ago, F. E. Morrison, the present superintendent, being in charge of the schools at that time.

The contracts for conveying the pupils are let upon competitive bids, the lowest responsible bidder being awarded the contract. The board of education in selecting drivers use the same judgment as in the employment of a teacher, the moral standing of the bidder being considered, as well as the lowness of his bid. The conveyances are seated lengthways, as shown in the cut, and are furnished with a step at the rear by which the pupils enter and leave the coach. The conveyances are furnished with cushioned seats, blankets and robes sufficient to make the pupils warm and comfortable, and are supplied with rubber cloth curtains on the sides and at the ends, so that each coach can be tightly closed in wet and stormy weather, and the curtains raised upon warm and pleasant days. The pupils report that they are more comfortable in these conveyances than they formerly were when they were required to walk through the rain, mud and snow, even for the distance of one-half mile. Following is the form for the driver's contract as used at Kingsville, O.:



Collecting Scholars for the Kingsville Schools.



CONTRACT AGREEMENT:

This Article of Agreement was made this, the..... day of.....189...., between the Board of Education of Kingsville township, parties of the first part, and..... party of the second part.

FIRST—The said party of the second part does hereby, for himself, his heirs, executors and administrators, covenant, promise and agree, with the said parties of the first part and their successors, that he will, for the sum of ... dollars per day, for the school days from Monday to Friday, inclusive, throughout the school year of 189..., furnish a suitable covered conveyance (approved by the said Board), said conveyance to be provided with side and end curtains which may be raised or removed on warm days and tightly closed on cold or stormy days; the said conveyance also to be provided with cushions for the seats and suitable blankets for the comfort of the pupils; the said party of the second part to gather the pupils of District No..... from their homes and to convey them to the High School Building in suitable time for school (arriving at High School Building not earlier than 8:30 nor later than 8:40 a. m., sun time), returning them to their homes in stormy weather; leaving the High School Building on the return trip not earlier than 3:40 p. m., nor later than 3:45 p. m., sun time. The party of the second part further agrees that no profane, immoral nor indecent language shall be used by himself or others in the conveyance during the transportation of the pupils to and from the school building; also, that he will allow no tobacco or spiritous liquors to be used in the conveyance by any person or persons,

SECOND—The said parties of the first part do hereby, for themselves and their successors, covenant, promise and agree to the said party of the second part, in consideration of the covenants and agreements being strictly performed and kept by the said party of the second part as specified, they will well and truly pay, or cause to be paid, unto the party of the second part or his assignees the sum of dollars per school day, for the school year, for the services rendered, payable monthly.

REMARKS:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties of these presents have hereunto
set their hands and seals this the..... day of.....
A. D. 189...

.....
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.....

Each accepted bidder is required to furnish a bond of \$200 for the faithful fulfillment of such contract.

The coaches are arranged so as to carry from eighteen to twenty-four pupils, and are furnished by the parties securing the contracts. The question is frequently asked if it is not difficult to secure bidders upon these contracts? During the five years of trial in Kingsville, at each annual letting of contracts, there have been several bidders for each route, and the number of bidders upon the present contracts exceeded the number of any previous year. The average price paid for the conveyance of pupils to and from the central school for the present year is \$1.23 per day for each route. This is less than the wages of a good teacher for the same period of time, besides the saving of many dollars upon incidental expenses and repairs.



Advantages of Centralization.



CENTRALIZATION gives the pupils in the several sub-districts between the ages of fourteen and seventeen an opportunity to attend school where they will not feel humiliated or out of place on account of the presence of a large number of primary pupils. It is a well known fact that in the average rural district the larger number of boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen are not in school, and when questioned in reference to the reason for not attending, it is readily discovered that these boys and girls have a desire for an education; but from a sense of pride of being obliged to attend school in a room where primary pupils are in the great majority and where the classes have but few pupils, they lose interest in their school work and remain at home. The boys and girls of this age are the persons that should be receiving the advantages of a good school, and this can be done by centralization.

2. It makes it possible to systematize the work and grade the pupils. By the present sub-district system in each township, we have from eight to sixteen teachers giving instructions to classes of from one to seven pupils, in the same grade of work in each sub-district of the township. This is an extravagant waste of time, and would not be permitted in any other line of business at the present time. If we convey these pupils to a central school and employ a teacher for the primary work, another for the intermediate work, and a third for the grammar work, we would do much more efficient work. The primary teacher would give the

instructions to the primary grade of pupils, giving more time to the recitations, because she would have fewer of them, and would be afforded the opportunity to employ all her energies in this grade of work. There are only a few teachers who are equally fitted both naturally and professionally to give instructions in all grades of school work, therefore, by centralization we would be able to select the teachers who are especially fitted for the different grades of work; hence, we would insure better work in the several departments upon the part of the teacher than by the present system. What is true in reference to the primary work, would be true in all other departments of school work.

3. It reduces the tardiness and irregular attendance to the minimum. The coaches are required to arrive at the central school building before 8:45 o'clock each morning, and the pupils coming from the several sub-districts are at the school building ready to take up their work at the beginning of the morning session. This not only leads the pupils to acquire the characteristic of being prompt, but gives them the benefit of the entire day's work. We also find that parents are not asking for pupils to be excused from the session for trivial reasons, as is the case in rural districts, but that the pupils remain throughout the school hours of the day and return to their homes in the coaches at the close of school. It is true that the pupils, being members of a centralized graded school where there are large classes, find that if they are absent from school they cannot keep their place in the class; hence, we have this incentive to regular attendance.

4. From a moral standpoint, centralization is beneficial in protecting and cultivating good morals. The pupils are in charge of a competent driver from the time they leave home in the morning until they are placed in charge of the teachers. This is also true upon the return trip after school until they arrive at home. Thus all opportunities for quarreling, the use of improper language, or for improper conduct on the way to and from school

are removed. The association together of all the young people of a township leads to a higher degree of culture and refinement, which is of great importance in insuring the success of the young when they enter upon the active duties of life.

5. By centralization an education is furnished to the pupils of rural districts practically at their own door, the conveyance coming for them in the morning and returning them to their homes at the close of school. With the conveniences that are furnished with these covered coaches there are no cold feet or wet feet and clothing, but the pupils are delivered at the school building in the most favorable condition for mental work.

6. Pupils have the advantages of more extended associations, larger classes with which to recite, and that interest, enthusiasm and confidence which numbers alone inspire. The advantages of each of these characteristics will be evident to the thoughtful mind. A teacher who has enjoyed the privilege of conducting recitations characterized by competition and enthusiasm induced by numbers will need no further argument in favor of centralization of schools.

7. The centralization of schools is not more expensive than the old sub-district system. To illustrate, let us suppose that a certain township has a valuation of taxable property to the amount of \$500,000, with a tax levy of six mills for school purposes; this would produce a school fund of \$3,000. Suppose this township to have ten sub-district schools. The employment of ten teachers at a salary of \$25 per month for nine months would cost \$2,250; the incidental expenses, consisting of fuel, repairs, maps, globes, painting and insurance, would average at least \$40 for each sub-district, which would amount to \$400; miscellaneous expenses estimate \$200; total cost of sub-district system \$2,850. Now by centralization of the schools in the average township the expenses would be about as follows:

3 Teachers @ \$25 per month, 9 months.....	\$ 675
6 Drivers @ \$1.25 per day, 180 days	1,350
3 Incidental expenses for 3 departments.....	120
Miscellaneous expenses	150

Total expense.....\$2,295

Gain by centralization, \$555 per year.

This is a general supposition. At Madison, Lake county, the Board of Education reports a saving of \$800 in a single year. At Kingsville, Ashtabula county, there was a saving of \$1,000 in three years. We have not learned of a single instance where centralization has been tried that the expenditures of the school fund exceeded those of the sub-district system. Considering the results obtained, certainly there should be no hesitancy upon the part of tax payers in adopting the system. Careful estimates have been made by experienced men, and from the practical workings of the system of centralization, it is evident that boards of education can erect the necessary buildings for the centralization of their schools. Give all the pupils of the township the advantages of these higher grade schools, and in a period of from five to fifteen years pay for the erection of the school building and the maintenance of the school, without any larger expenditure of school funds than by the sub-district system. In other words, there will be the saving of commodious and convenient school buildings necessary for the education of the pupils of a township in this period of time. If we were to inform you of a similar fact in any other line of business, the public in general would hasten to accept it, but when it is in the line of public education, requiring the outlay of only \$4 or \$5 at the highest to each individual tax-payer, and this to be returned with large dividends in the near future, there is a hesitancy that ought not to exist; but when we have demonstrated with mathematical exactness that there is an actual saving to the tax-payer with larger returns of the money invested, it is difficult for us to understand why he does not hasten to bring about the changes.

That which has been tested and found to prove true in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky, will, under ordinary circumstances, prove true with other places. Several townships in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky have adopted what is known as the "Kingsville Plan of Centralization of Schools," since its trial at Kingsville, Ohio, and so far as we have been able to learn, each trial has been a practical demonstration of the facts given in this work. Hon. E. J. Clapp, ex-Member of the Ohio Legislature, says: "If I wanted to see how much public money I could expend, without getting any return for the same, I would continue the present sub-district system of education."

8. By centralization it is possible to formulate and effectively carry into operation, a course of study. Boards of Education and teachers in the past have realized the importance of having and following a course of study in the education of the young. But when they have attempted to effect this change in their schools, they have found it practically impossible; for, under the sub-district system, it would require the teacher to give instruction in at least eight different grades of work, which represents some forty-five classes for daily recitation. It is practically impossible for any one teacher to give instructions daily in this number of recitations. By centralization, we would have, according to the number of pupils to receive instructions, three or four teachers to give instructions; but we would have no more recitations than in a single district school, where all grades of pupils are represented. Hence, we would have only from ten to fifteen recitations for each teacher for the day. This would give ample time for systematic and thorough work.

The importance of systematic work in the school is evident. If we were to employ a mechanic to erect a building, would we select one without a plan? One who would saw the timbers here or there without measurement and regardless of form, or would we select a mechanic who has a plan, and who will endeavor to follow

it skillfully? Certainly we would select the last mentioned mechanic, and then we would have reason to expect a symetrical and splendid edifice when completed. You may as well expect a beautiful and elegant piece of architecture from a mechanic without a plan or system in his work, as to expect a symetrical and well-developed mind from a school without system or plan of instructions, based upon psychological truths. System, perfect system, is the secret of success in the counting house, and all other commercial and mechanical enterprises, and is no less valuable in all true educational work. It can be had in rural schools only by centralization of schools or the employment of from two to three teachers for each sub-district school, which would be impracticable.

9. It gives the country boys and girls similar educational advantages to those enjoyed by the boys and girls of the larger villages and cities.

10. It brings all parts of the township into closer touch and sympathy ; unites the board of education with common interests, each feeling that they have an equal interest in the school. Therefore wrangling and dissensions are unknown among the members, and all are interested in the success and progress of the school.

11. It increases the value of real estate. At the time of the centralization of schools in Kingsville, there were several vacant farm houses in the township, but at the present time all are occupied, and I have before me several applications from parents who desire us to find for them, if possible, property that they can rent for the coming year. Each of these applicants states that he has children to educate and desires to move into the township so that his children can be conveyed to a graded school. What is true in Kingsville I find to be true in other places where they have adopted centralization of schools.

12. It gives the parents an opportunity to communicate daily with the village, saving the time of making special trips to the

village for groceries and similar errands. The children are mail carriers—thus each home gets its mail daily.

These are some of the many advantages of centralization of country schools. In Kingsville the longest route is four and one-half miles. In some townships the routes are at least seven miles long. We believe that the routes should be so arranged as not to exceed five miles, if such an arrangement is possible.

The following is taken from State School Commissioner Hon. O. T. Corson's Forty-Third Annual Report to the Governor of Ohio:

“As the state grows older the country school problem increases in both importance, and difficulty of solution. In some localities the sparseness of the population becomes a very important factor in its consideration, and in such localities, provided the roads are good, the true solution is no doubt found in the conveyance of the children to and from a central school. Special laws, authorizing boards of education to establish such schools in Lake, Geauga, Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Stark and Portage counties, already exist and the plan is no longer an experiment.

“One of the first schools established under this special legislation is located at Kingsville, Ashtabula county. The schools in that locality under the old plan were very small, and therefore necessarily very expensive, from the standpoint of either the per capita cost or the results attained. Under the new plan of consolidation, which has been in operation nearly four years, several of the outlying districts were abandoned ; and the pupils conveyed to the school at the center of the town in wagons, specially provided for the purpose. The expense of schooling the children has thus been reduced nearly one-half, the daily attendance has been very largely increased, and the quality of the work done has been greatly improved. The following quotations, taken from a recent report of Supt. F. E. Morrison, of Kingsville, show the decided advantages of this plan :

“ ‘ By this system the pupils of the sub-districts are given the same advantages for obtaining an education as the village pupils,

and this result has been obtained without working any disadvantage to the village pupils, for we have been enabled to open a new room and supply another teacher in the village schools, thus reducing the number of grades in each room and giving all the pupils better school advantages. We have sufficient room yet for several more pupils without crowding the rooms.

“The pupils of the sub-districts have not only been given the advantage of more extended associations and larger classes with which to recite, but they have also the advantages of a school where the teacher has fewer recitations and can give more time and attention to each recitation, thus the pupil's progress is much more rapid than is possible in a school where there are three times as many classes and one-sixth the number of pupils. It is a fact that the work of the teacher depends more upon the number of classes to recite than the number of pupils in attendance. It is a pleasure, indeed, to note that the attendance in the sub-districts that have availed themselves of the new system, has increased from fifty to one hundred and fifty per cent. in some cases ; and a large increase in all cases. The daily attendance in the same sub-districts has increased from fifty or sixty per cent. to ninety or ninety-five per cent., thus increasing greatly the returns from the school fund invested. This has been accomplished at a saving of more than one thousand dollars to the taxpayers in the three years.’

“What is true of Kingsville is in a large measure true of other localities in Lake, Geauga, and other counties to which the special legislation is applicable, and the plan is worthy of the earnest attention and study of all who are interested in the welfare of the country schools.”

Selected testimonials of townships that have recently adopted the system :

Trumbull, Ashtabula Co., has the past year consolidated five districts, having a total of eighty pupils, bringing them to a central school by means of four wagons. These conveyances had from four to seven miles per day to cover, and cost the board from \$1.00

to \$1.44 per day. Under the new system, the attendance has increased over twenty-three per cent., and Mr. Goodell, the Township clerk writes us that "It is conceded by nearly all who send to school that they have been worth more than double what they were under the old system." A year ago one district paid \$25.00 per month for a teacher, with an average of three pupils. This year there has been an average attendance from that district of eight scholars.

The Windsor, O., Clerk of Schools writes that while they have not been operating under the new plan long, all are well satisfied with the change. The Clerk of the Board of Education writes: "We like the system and everyone seems pleased. The advantages gained are so much greater than under the old way, and at comparatively the same cost."

The Kingsville schools are filled to overflowing. Chairs have to be set around the walls in some of the rooms, and all the seats have two pupils in them. There are no vacant houses in town, and inquiries for farms are heard nearly every day from someone who wishes to move into the township in order to send their children to the schools.—*Ashtabula Telegraph*, December 13, 1897.

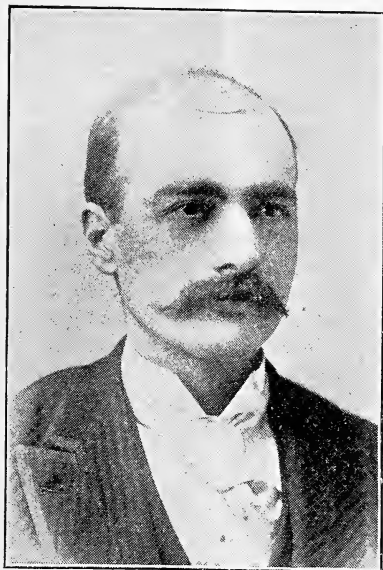
Two years' trial and observation of the plan of consolidating schools and transporting pupils has proven to us the wisdom of the plan. The law requires that the money raised for educational purposes shall be so used as to give all the youth of the state equal educational advantages. That the way the school money was expended under the old plan, utterly failed to meet this requirement of the law, can not be questioned. That consolidation is an important step toward giving to pupils in the rural districts equal educational privileges with the pupils in cities and towns and thus carrying into effect the spirit and intention of our school laws, is, it seems to us, so evident as to need no defense. The board of education, which is using the school funds, aims to give all of the children equal advantages to gain an education is certainly working conformity to law, and, if necessary, will be sustained by the

courts of our state. Much of the opposition to the new plan which was noticeable a year ago, we are glad to say, is dying out. Several influential citizens, patrons of our schools, who, a year ago were either opposed to the plan or satisfied with the old way, have recently expressed themselves as now being in favor of consolidation. This is very encouraging, as it shows that the good people of our township are giving that unprejudiced and thoughtful attention to the school problems which will finally lead to the adoption of any plan that will improve our schools.—*From Supt. J. R. Adams' report, Madison, Ohio, June, 1897.*

We have no doubt but that the present session of our state legislature will give us a general law for the state, giving all boards of education the privilege to centralize their schools, and that the time is not far distant when the sub-district school of Ohio will be of the past.

F. E. MORRISON, Kingsville, O.





F. E. Morrison, B. B.,

SUPERINTENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, KINGSVILLE, O., author of "Centralization of Schools, its Needs and Advantages," and "Methods and Reviews in U. S. History," is prepared to make a limited number of contracts with Institute committees for either Professional or Academic work, as Institute Lecturer and Instructor.

Professor Morrison has had thirteen years' experience as a teacher and superintendent in the Public Schools of Ohio; for two years he was superintendent of Public Instruction in Orwell Normal Institute, at Orwell, Ohio. Six years ago he accepted the superintendency of the Kingsville Public Schools, at Kingsville, Ohio. During this time has been put in operation what is known as the "Kingsville System of Education." This system provides for the centralization of rural schools, and conveying the pupils in hacks to and from the central school. Kingsville was the first township in the State to adopt this system, thus becoming the banner township in this work in the State of Ohio. Under the direction of Professor Morrison, this system has been introduced in many townships in the state, and is receiving national consideration. "Professor Morrison is among the foremost instructors of Northeastern Ohio, and has been identified with Institute work for several years."

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